

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01 CIAE-00

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SECDEF WASHDC

OASD WASHDC/ISA

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

AFSC ANDREWS AFB MD/CC/OI

ASD WPAFB OH/CC/OI/YP

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 0386

3.O. 11652/ GDS

TAGS/ MAAS, NATO, NO

SUBJ: AIRCRAFT REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

REFS: (A) OSLO 337; (B) OSAF/SAFIL 290010Z JAN 75 (NOTAL)

1. IN DISCUSSIONS WITH AN MOD OFFICIALS ON 28 JANUARY, HE
STATED THE MOD POSITION WITH REGARD TO THE REPLACEMENT
AIRCRAFT AS FOLLOWS: (1) THE NORWEGIAN'S ARE PAR-
TICIPATING IN THE MULTI-NATIONAL FIGHTER PROGRAM
COMMITTEE TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT A COMMON AIRCRAFT
CAN BE SELECTED BY THE FOUR COUNTRIES; (2) THAT ISSUE WILL
BE RESOLVED BY THE MINISTERS OF THE FOUR COUNTRIES SUBSE-
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QUENT TO STUDY OF THE REPORTS PREPARED FOR THE MINISTERS BY

THE STEERING COMMITTEE, HEADED BY GENERAL HAMRE; (3) THIS DECISION WILL PROBABLY BE MADE AT THE EARLIEST IN MID-FEBRUARY; (4) THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO GIVE APPROVAL FOR NORWAY TO ENTER A REPLACEMENT PROGRAM; (5) IT IS NOT ANTICIPATED THAT THIS APPROVAL WILL BE GIVEN UNTIL AFTER THE MOD DELIBERATIONS, AND A DECISION HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED; AND (6) OFFICIALLY ONLY ONE MILLION KRONER IS IN THE DEFENSE BUDGET FOR 1975 FOR THIS PROGRAM.

2. COMMENT: THE NORWEGIAN MILITARY ARE DELIGHTED WITH THE SELECTION OF THE F-16 BY THE USAF. IT APPEARS THAT THEIR DEFENSE BUDGET FOR 1975 CONTAINS SUFFICIENT REPROGRAMMABLE MONEY TO ALLOW THEM TO PROCEED WITH THE FULL SCALE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM WITHOUT REQUIRING A SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION. WHILE THERE IS NO PUBLIC CONSENSUS THAT NORWAY MUST MAKE A DECISION IN 1975 TO ENTER THE FULL SCALE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND SUBSEQUENT PURCHASE OF THE AIRPLANE, SHOULD THE FOUR NATIONS AGREE ON THE F-16, THE POLITICAL PRESSURES TO ENTER THE PROGRAM AND OBTAIN NECESSARY PARLIAMENTARY APPROVAL WOULD BE SUBSTANTIAL, IF NOT DECISIVE.

3. WHILE REFERENCE A EXPRESSED SOME RESERVATIONS ABOUT A PUBLIC AFFAIRS PRESENTATION FOR THE F-16 WHICH MIGHT BE CONSTRUED AS U.S. SALES PRESSURE, VISITS BY OFFICIALS OF GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND WHITNEY, AS DESCRIBED IN REFERENCE B, WOULD BE WELCOME HERE. THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE HAS NOT INVOLVED ITSELF IN MEDIA COMMENT REGARDING THE REPLACEMENT AIRCRAFT ISSUE. THE SWEDISH FIRM, SAAB, HAS RECENTLY ISSUED A NUMBER OF PRESS RELEASES DETAILING THE ADVANTAGES OF A VIGGEN PURCHASE. FACTUAL INFORMATION ON U.S. PROPOSAL FOR, AND ON THE OPERATIONAL SUITABILITY OF, THE F-16 BY GENERAL DYNAMICS AND PRATT AND WHITNEY VISITORS WOULD STRIKE AN EFFECTIVE BALANCE IN THE MEDIA. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE PROPOSED VISIT BY NORWEGIAN MEDIA TO THE U.S. WOULD BE MOST APPROPRIATE. OUR ASSESSMENT IS THAT 24 FEB OFFERS OPTIMUM TIMING ADVANTAGES FOR OSLO, I.E., AFTER FOUR MINISTERS OF DEFENSE CONSIDER ISSUE, BUT PRIOR TO ANY DISCUSSIONS IN NORWEGIAN PARLIAMENT.

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